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AN UNPUBLISHED POEM OF TIDEO ACCIARINI TO POPE SIXTUS IV

The Ambrosian Library in Milan holds a manuscript codex of the late 15th century in which, among other contents, there is the poem *Ad beatissimum Christianae religionis parentem Maximumque fidei Romanae Antistitem Sistum [sic] Pontificem IIII. Seraphici Francisci pientissimus hortatus in Turcas, per Tydeum Acciarinum Picentem* (call no. F 33 sup., ff. 12v-17v). This poetic epistle in 404 hexameter verses was almost entirely neglected in the literature until quite recently, and has never been published. It deserves attention, however, because its author is Tideo Acciarini (Tydeus Acciarinus, Sant'Elpidio a Mare, ca 1430/1440 – ca 1500), who

in the 1460s and 1470s was working as *magister humanitatis* in Dalmatia: in Split around 1464 he was the teacher of Marko Marulić (Marcus Marulus), and was friends with Juraj Šižgorić (Georgius Sisgoreus) from Šibenik; he spent time in Zadar; and from 1477 he lived in Dubrovnik, where two of his several pupils were Ilija Crijević (Aelius Lampridius Cervinus) and Jakov Bunić (Iacobus Bonus).

This paper describes the manuscript in which it is preserved; the dating and the possible place in which it was written are determined; a review of the composition and contents is provided and the principles according to which the publication is made are outlined. Then comes the *editio princeps* of Acciarini's poem to Sixtus IV, with a parallel translation into Croatian and accompanying notes.

The manuscript is not Acciarini's autograph; this can be concluded from a comparison with reliably determined autographs and on the basis of characteristic scribal errors.

Since Sixtus IV was elected pope on August 10 and crowned on August 25, 1471, the *terminus post quem* for the origin of this poem can be taken to be the middle or end of August that year. A second reliable chronological marker is given by the mention of Venetian doge Cristoforo Moro (verses 298-301), who died November 9, 1471, which is thus the *terminus ante quem*.

Although we have no reliable information about where Acciarini was in the September and October of 1471, it is confirmed that on January 14, 1471, his second two-year period of employment (*conducta*) in the school in Split was going on. In addition, it is recorded that on June 1 and June 27 of that year he was the representative of two persons from Rab, Martin Nimira and Dominik Spirondella, in a law case brought by the Split dyer Mihovil against the merchant Bartolomeo of Urbino. It is thus very possible that the poem was written in Split.

Acciarini sent the epistle sent to Pope Sixtus IV (Francesco della Rovere) as an exhortation to him to organise resistance to the Ottoman inroads and to launch a Crusade. The text can be divided into three large units. In the first, after an introductory address to the Pope, the Turkish advance, destruction and cruelty are described; the second part describes the fall of Euboea (Negroponte) while the third is a direct exhortation to Sixtus IV to assemble allies and to set off on a campaign. Below a more detailed review point by point is given.

I. Introduction, the Turkish advance, their devastations and cruelties

1-20: Address to Sixtus IV, warning of the present danger from the Ottomans, call to rapid reaction.

21-64: Turkish conquests listed, with a particular lament that Greece, »the cradle of the Muses«, should have fallen under barbarian rule.

64-107: Turkish crimes are described: they burn and raze churches, stable their horses there, kill little children, women, young and old; raping, flogging and enslaving.

108-121: Further areas conquered (Achaia, Thrace, Colchis, Hellespont, Corinth).

122-158: Trepidations of those still free (Rhodes and Cyprus anxiously awaiting attack; Crete will not be saved even by the protection of Jupiter, as is shown by the example of Macedonia, Phocis, Epirus and Delphi).

159-181: The Turkish army has entered the Bay of Illyria, arrived at Salona, Klis, Split, Skradin, Zadar and the Timavo.

II. Fall of Euboea

182-192: Who would not weep over the terrible fate of Euboea?

193-238: Description of the siege and fall of Negroponte (fair sailing for the Ottoman fleet; building a bridge across the straits and the crossing of the army; siege, bombardment, treason and fall; fighting in the city, heroic resistance of the last defenders).

III. Exhortation to Pope Sixtus IV

239-273: New address to the pope; the fruitless efforts of Pius II and Paul II are referred to.

273-297: St Francis* calls to Sixtus from the heavens, urging him to undertake a crusade, relates a dream that presaged Sixtus as the saviour of the Church (it is actually a paraphrase of the dream of Innocent III about St Francis).

298-367: St Francis lists all the allies that Sixtus should invite to join the cause: the Venetians, headed by Cristoforo Moro; the Romans; Ferdinand (Ferrante) I of Naples; the Duke of Milan (Galeazzo Maria Sforza); Florence; Bologna, Mantua, Ferrara; Costanzo Sforza; Duke of Urbino Federico da Montefeltro; Giulio Cesare da Varano, lord of Camerino; the king of Hungary (Matthias Corvinus); the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick III; the King of France (Louis XI); at the call of Sixtus, Germany, France and Spain will respond, and, in general, the whole of Christendom.

368-404: The final call to Sixtus: seize arms, you will certainly win a fitting reward – a wreath of oak leaves (oak and acorn are in the coat of arms of the Della Rovere family); your undertaking will be followed by brother Cardinals, Bessarion the first among them; with them by your side, you shall bring Italy a triumph over the barbarians.

Since the *codex unicus* of Acciarini's poem is not an autograph, the orthography in this edition has been classicized.

Key words: Tideo Acciarini, Pope Sixtus IV (Francesco della Rovere), fall of Negroponte, a crusade against the Ottoman, poetic epistle, *editio princeps*

* The choice of this persuader is understandable since Francesco della Rovere was a Franciscan, and from 1464 until his election held the office of Minister General of the Franciscan Order.